

## Possible syntactic subject positions in Turkish: Evidence from phonology

The question of where in the sentence nominative arguments can appear has been well studied within the fields of syntax (e.g. Heycock, 1993; Ura, 1996 for Japanese) and semantics (e.g. Diesing, 1992; Kratzer, 1996 for English and German). Most of the debate has centered around the issue of whether a nominative phrase has to be licensed in SpecTP (e.g., Chomsky, 1991) or if it may remain in its base position (i.e., internal to  $vP/VP$ , Agree model in Chomsky, 2000). In this paper, we argue, based on prosodic evidence, that the latter option is true for Turkish; that is, Turkish allows nominative DPs to stay in a  $vP/VP$  internal position, though, under certain conditions, they have to be within SpecTP.

We start with some facts about Turkish prosody: First, in Turkish, phrase level stress/prominence is assigned to the leftmost prosodic word (PWd) level stress (Kabak & Vogel, 2001), as indicated in boldface in (1), creating both a phonological phrase (PPh) and an intonational phrase (I) (indicated with brackets) in the sense of Nespor & Vogel (1986):

- |                   |                    |          |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------|
| (1) a. [iyí adám] | b. [ <b>adám</b> ] | c. [iyí] |
| nice man          | man                | good     |
| ‘a/the nice man’  | ‘a/the man’        | ‘good’   |

When, however, there are two syntactic projections, this usually means that there are going to be two intonational phrases which will both bear their own phrase level stress, creating two elements with main stress in a sentence like (2):

- (2) [Ó] [iyí adám-dır]
- he nice man COPULA
- ‘He is a nice man.’

Second, given that bare nouns in Turkish can have a definite or an indefinite interpretation (Kornfilt, 1997), a sentence such as (3) could have two different meanings, (3a) and (3b):

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| (3) a. Adam gel-di | b. Adam gel-di   |
| man arrive-PAST    | man arrive-PAST  |
| ‘The man arrived.’ | ‘A man arrived.’ |

Though (3a) and (3b) look exactly the same on the surface, the two differ in terms of prosody: Whereas (3a) has a prosodic structure like that of (2) in that it is composed of two intonational phrases (see (4a)), (3b) differs, for it creates only one intonational phrase, as in (4b):

- |                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (4) a. [ <b>Adám</b> ] [gel-dí] | b. [ <b>Adám</b> gel-dí] |
| man arrive-PAST                 | man arrive-PAST          |
| ‘The man arrived.’              | ‘A man arrived.’         |

We argue, based on these facts, that the definite *adam* ‘man’ in (4a) is external to the root-VP in syntax (thus creating its own intonational domain) whereas the indefinite *adam* ‘man’ in (4b) remains within the same projection as the verb (and thus sharing the same intonational domain with it), i.e. a correlation exists between the syntactic phrasal domain where a nominative subject appears and the prosodic intonational domain.

This is further evidenced by the fact that, in transitive sentences like (5), an accusative object (i.e., an internal argument of the verb) is stressed in a *v*/VP irrespective of its (in)definiteness, whereas the verb is not (i.e. the two are within the same intonational phrase). Notice how (5) patterns with (4b) in terms of prosody:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (5) a. [Adám gör-dúm]<br>man see-PAST-1sg<br>'(I) saw a man.' | b. [Adam-í gör-dúm]<br>man-ACC see-PAST-1sg<br>'(I) saw the man.' |
|---|---|

To recapitulate, then, an indefinite subject in an unaccusative construction as in (4b) has to appear in a position lower than SpecTP, just like an internal argument of a transitive verb like in (5). This point is further supported by the fact that bare nouns in unergatives cannot have an indefinite interpretation, as shown in (6):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (6) a. [Adám] [gül-dú]<br>man laugh-PAST<br>'The man laughed.' | b. *[Adám gül-dú]<br>man laugh-PAST<br>'A man laughed.' |
|--|---|

Though (6a) is grammatical since the definite nominative *adam* 'man' is outside of the root-VP (and thus creating its own separate intonational phrase), (6b) is not since the nominative there cannot be an internal argument of the verb (and cannot thus stay within the same intonational domain as the verb), for, under the standard assumption, arguments of unergative verbs have to be external, introduced by a functional head such as *v* (e.g. Kratzer, 1996; Chomsky, 1995).

All things considered, syntactic and prosodic evidence both seem to suggest that Turkish nominatives are not necessarily licensed in SpecTP, but sometimes stay *in situ*. We have shown, in this paper, that this is the case when the subject is indefinite.

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